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1945-07-01 Alfred P. Maurice Letter to Dolores Robson

Alfred P. Maurice, 1921-

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(62)

Sunday, July 30 ~~June~~ 1945
 147raa Camp
 APO 75, Manila.
Manila

Bunny Sweetheart;

I know that you must be wondering what could have happened to me but the new address on the envelope should tell you what the trouble was. I was once more on the move, this time to stay put for a while, I hope. I stayed over at Biak for about a week and just got up here yesterday. I arrived minus the last three of your letters, the letters I had written to you, my fountain pen, my new drawing pen, and my field jacket. All the things were in my field jacket and I got so excited getting on the truck to take us out here that I forgot the jacket. I went back this morning but there was not a trace of it anywhere. My name and address were on the letters from you so if the person who got it was even fairly honest, I might get it back. I think that I have seen the last of it though so I shall just have to settle down to getting along without those things. I also had all the sketches I had done en route. Some of them were fairly good too. I will just have to learn to be less careless in the future. I am going to miss the fountain pen for writing and the drawing pen. Ah well, I have gotten along without them before and shall probably have to do so again.

The time I spent on Biak was very nice. It did rain to beat the devil a few times but outside of that I could have stood a lot of the kind of work they gave us. The following is a typical days schedule:

5:45	--	Reveille
6:45	--	I get up
7:25	--	Police call
7:30	--	Hit the bunk
9:00	--	Red Cross for coffee and donuts
10:00	--	Hit the bunk
12:00	--	Chow
1:00	--	R T B
5:00	--	Chow
7:00	--	Movie
9:00	--	Red Cross for more C&D
10:00	--	And so to bed

It sounds like quite a nice schedule don't you think? I enjoyed it very much while it lasted. We drew three cans of beer twice a week, and two packages of cigarettes each day.

Our plane trip from Finsch to Biak was rough in the real sense of the word. We ran into several storms along the way. It was amusing to watch the others even though I know that I was acting just like them. When we took off, the safety belts had to be fastened. Everyone made sure that his was on very snug and then waited, very apprehensively to see what would happen. We got off OK and after we had been airborne a while one of the braver fellows took off the Mae West he was wearing and unfastened his safety belt. The others followed suit one by one, some glancing anxiously at the water below before doing this. Then they slowly gathered courage and started to walk around the Plane and all was well once more. Then--- we hit a rough spot and, in much less time than it takes to write it, everyone was back in his seat with his Mae West on and his safety belt in hand. When this scare wore off everyone discarded the Mae West again, very sheepishly and we all went back to being brave again. Some of the fellows got quite sick and others of us decided that what we needed just then was to lie down and try to get some sleep. I got over the feeling of having butterflies in my stomach very soon and was back to normal.

We hit about three or four other storms on the way up to Biak. They weren't too bad and we got in there all right. I was worried for a while though and I don't mind saying so. There was just too much water under me to make me feel happy about the whole thing.

As I said though, the deal with which we were confronted when we got to Biak was very nice and I could have stayed there a few more days or weeks as far as I was concerned. We had a few false alarms before we left there. One of the officers coming over and telling us to pack because we would surely leave that night, and then the next morning finding us there just as strong as ever. When it finally did come time to leave, we were decidedly suspicious about whether this was another false alarm or not. It was the real thing and we made a very good trip up here. The weather was fine and the plane was a very good one with comfortable seats in it. I couldn't help but feel that it would have been much better if I had been on my way to you instead of to another one in the stops which are keeping me from you. I don't like it at all, being away from you I mean. I miss you so. I haven't been able to get you out of my mind at all. I f I have circles under my eyes it will merely be from the fact that every night when I go to bed I start thinking of you and of how nice it will be to get back to you and to be married to you. When this happens I just can't go to sleep because all the grievances I have against a world which keeps me from you come to the fore and all I think of is how much I want to be with you to hold you in my arms and never let you go again.

While at Biak I saw a USO show which was really a stinkeroo. I have yet to see a good one. It seems that they round up all the talent, such as it is, which does not go over in the States and they send it over here expecting the GIs to swallow the show and think that it is wonderful. Then when the boys do voice their disapproval they are reprimanded for it and are called ingrates. Personally, I think that the show which the fellows put on at the Fifth Replacement Depot was by far better than any show I have seen out here, Except for Irving Berlin's show, and our show at the Fifth rivalled Berlin's. This show was called "Music to Remember". That is the show I saw at Biak. I made a nice sketch of the show which was one of those which I lost. I'll try to reproduce it though.

I finished the book "World's End" while on my pilgrimage up here and liked it very much. It is a good behind the scenes story of the times. His characters are good. I like Beauty with her very confusing love life. She is a very good character, a charming sinner with a Puritan conscience. He doesn't seem to make Lanny very real at least for my taste, but he does manage to get his ideas across very well through him. I read about all the reformers in the book and get the idea of what the hell is the use of trying to reform people. I am becoming an advocate of to hell with it all and just let me get the most fun that I can out of life. It isn't worthwhile trying to figure out other people's problems because we aren't here long enough to do anything about it for ourselves and I think that we should enjoy ourselves while we may. I do not think that I shall find myself flitting around on the clouds of our afterlife so I want to be sure of my full measure of fun here as long as I do not hurt others while having my fun. I have an idea that this is your idea of this subject too. We will be very happy Darling. I know you shall make me so and that I shall do everything in my power to make you likewise. I love you very much Sweetheart.

Those letters I lost were the nicest I have had from you for quite a while Darling. They were just like the old ones used to be. I like so much to hear everything about you, everything you do, think, and say. I am interested in YOU. I am very glad that you had as nice a birthday party as you did. I wish I had been there instead of the cardboard soldier you had for a place card. They had the right idea though. That was just what you needed to make the occasion complete. I was interested in the things they gave you. Just what was that baby cream that Susie gave you though. What did that get in there for? Bunny, are you hiding something from me? I know you are not. All too well do I know it. I wish that we had been married when I was in the States. We should not have listened to Mother and should have gone ahead anyway. Of course we have the consolation of her having said that she thought we should have followed the course she had previously cautioned us against. You did give her the devil

for that for me didn't you Honey? I will remedy the situation when I get back and shall waste no time at all in getting married to you as soon as I get back so we can make up for lost time. We will have an awful lot to make up for too. All these wasted nights alone when I should be with you. It just grates me.

I enjoy your letters in which you mention that dance I almost went to. I know how you felt and I think that I can assure you that I shall not go fooling around with women, and can fully assure you that if I ever did go to a dance and dance with anyone else that she could never compare with you whoever she was because to me there is no other who could. You don't mind my thinking that you are the perfect girl for me do you? because the truth of the matter is that it is true. It satisfies my male vanity to think that you care very much for me, just go on caring for me Honey because that is the nicest thing about life.

The mosquitoes here are terrific. They just eat the devil out of me tonight as I sit here. I have a very good mosquito net though and it fits my bunk very nice so I don't have to tuck it in but just have to drape it around the cot. It was on the bunk when I got here, and after I had gone to all the trouble of taking it off the bunk at Biak and hanging my old one up there. It serves me right though. I guess I can stand the extra work that this entailed. I hope that our equipment for drawing gets here soon because I want to get started on the project I told you about a while back. I will let you see what it is as soon as I get it finished. I think you will like it very much when you see it. I'll never get started on it if my things don't come up.

This is the rainy season here in Manila. It rains a little every day now, later it will rain all day long, so I am told. The ground here is very unusual; there is a top layer of thick black loam under which there is solid rock. When it rains, the loam makes a nice thick juicy mud and it is fun walking through it trying to find the spots where the rock is near the top. This particular of the island is a plain and you can see a great distance in all directions to the fringe of mountains which surround the plain. On the open side is the bay. From the air it is a very nice picture, this large plain with the mountains around it and the ground on the plain divided into neat patterns by the farmers. The Filipinos have nice gardens here. It seems strange to see part of the gardens, the rice paddies, under water and to see the farmers wading around in the paddies. On the other parts of this island that we flew over I saw whole hills beautifully terraced. It was just like looking down on one of the army's contour maps with the terrace walls as the lines, or looking down on a large fingerprint with all the whorls. It was a very beautiful sight and I wish you had been there to enjoy it with me. It was also nice to see all the islands. I never realized that there were so many of them. They are anywhere in size from little pin points of land to large islands such as Luzon. It was the nicest trip I have yet taken by air. Almost all my previous flying has been done over prairie or jungle and that was not too interesting. As I said before, our plane was a new one and had nice seats on it. There was an Aussie aboard with whom I struck up a conversation. He was an interesting fellow to talk to and astounded me with his knowledge of US history and geography. When I commented on this he told me that people in a large country like the US are so large that they are interested only in their own affairs while small countries like Australia are so dependent upon the larger countries that they must learn about them. He told how the history and geography of Australia were not stressed at all and that the history of the world, and of the British Empire in particular, were the subjects taught. In answer to my queries about the land down under he would use examples of American towns and areas which corresponded to different parts of Australia which I asked questions about. He was an intelligence officer in the Aussie army. We got him into a game of hearts, which he had learned to play while he was with some American outfit. He did very well too. He ended a close second. Of course you realize that I won the game. While at Biak I played cribbage with an old sailor who had just about despaired of ever finding any cribbage players in this younger generation. He won two out of three games. The first one, which he won, was won by a rather lopsided score but the other two were quite close games. He got quite a boot out of beating me and told me that he had yet to meet the player who could beat him in the long stretch. I would have liked to have played a few more games with him but I

left Biak that night.

The reports about the number of Jap planes which were shot down here on Luzon were not exaggerations. I have seen them lying all over the fields along some of the roads here. They looked as if they had all been caught on the ground before they got into the air. The big red meatball was on the side of each one. I was surprised at the appearance of the planes though. I had imagined that they would be built very flimsily but instead they were built along the same lines that the American planes are built on. All the same, they were of no use to anyone except as junk. They will provide a nice stockpile for anyone who wants to make a wristwatch bracelet. There are evidences of the war all around here. They have the city fairly well cleared out but it is quite evident just what the extent of the damage was. The newsreels don't start to show it all. There is hardly a building standing here. Once in a while I came upon a building which seemed to be in pretty good shape and found on closer inspection that the facade was all that remained standing and that the interior had been gutted and the back blown off. Many of the residences as well as the public buildings were destroyed. It is a terrible mess. The engineers are doing a good job of getting the streets cleaned up. It was good to walk in the streets of a town again, even if it was only a rather empty shell of a town. There were streets and sidewalks just as I had pictured them when I was down in New Guinea. There were even railroad tracks and trolley tracks. I didn't get to see the walled city but will get there the next time I go into town. I understand that that part of town took a terrific pounding and is really ruined. It was there that most of the Jap atrocities during the taking of Manila were perpetrated. People were herded into buildings and the buildings set afire. One of the fellows I met on Biak was with the 37th Division when they entered the walled city and he said that the job of cleaning it of Japs was not too bad but that it was a hell of a job cracking the wall in the first place. The wall was thirty feet thick in places and could only be broken down by continuous firing with heavy artillery on one small point in the wall. He also told of the cases of torture, murder and rape that they found when they entered.

I must leave you now my Darling but I shall be back tomorrow with more news of my new home. Until then my Sweet I send you all

MY LOVE AND KISSES.

Fred die

Sorry Darling but I can't do the covers until my materials catch up with me. I'll start thinking up ideas now though so I shall be able to get started right away. I love you Darling.